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ners and morals of their caste. She might discipline them with slaps and scolding but was usually indulgent. She taught her children to look to her brother as their authority, and might either report their conduct to him or (more commonly) try to shield them from his correction. A woman's duties to her adult son were to assist in cooking for him, to serve him with food along with other men before she and other women had eaten, and to assist in care of the house. She should offer him counsel and comfort, respecting his wishes but attempting to dissuade him from wrong. Her own moral conduct in the village was a part of her duty to her children. If she infringed the religious laws her shame fell also on them and they were the most likely persons to be visited with supernatural vengeance. A woman should accept the suggestions of her adult son with regard to her conduct. If he became her kāranavan she theoretically owed him obedience in law.

A child should respect his mother's teaching, although strict obedience to her was not demanded before the age of five or six. Throughout her life he should revere her, remembering that he owed to her his membership of his taravād and all the birth-status rights of his caste. For her sake he should maintain right relations with his matrilineal kinsfolk, submitting to his male elders and protecting his sisters and their children. A man should protect his mother from slander or physical harm. When he entered the village after an absence he must go first to greet her. While he stayed there he should live in his natal house and make himself available to his mother's requests. He should not incur her jealousy by visiting a wife for long periods in the daytime, or by eating frequently in the house of a wife or of friends. In all things he should place his mother's comfort and the interests of the taravād above his private concerns. In her old age he must offer comfort and companionship to his mother and after death must perform funeral rites and make annual offerings on behalf of her soul. Neglect of the mother by an adult son was the height of impiety. The lineage goddess was believed to inflict sickness on an impious son.

The etiquette of behavior between mother and adult son required mutual respect and a certain restraint on both sides. Each stood when the other entered the room, although they might later sit together and converse informally. They discussed questions of property and the affairs of the taravād in serious confidence, but undignified gossip and talk touching on sexual matters were prohibited between them.

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603 took upon herself much of the moral training of her grandchildren. It [869] was chiefly from the grandmother that children learned religious mythology and stories from their taravād's history. If she was the oldest woman of the house and if her son was kāranavan, a woman of strong personality might virtually direct the household, protecting the grandchildren both from their mother's indulgence and from their uncles' displeasure. She seldom inflicted corporal punishment but was obeyed [861] by young children more readily than the mother. As they grew to maturity a woman tended to show indulgent pride in her grandsons [858] as the pillars of her old age. By contrast she might show jealousy of her granddaughters and be a harsher judge of their manners and morals than was their mother.

MAN-SISTER'S SON

604 A kāranavan had special rights in and obligations to his sisters' chil-429 dren, some of which have been detailed. As their legal guardian he exercised the rights and obligations which normally accrue to the legal father in the higher patrilineal castes of India. He was respon-604 sible for his nephews' training in the laws and morality of their caste, 86 in literacy, in agricultural work, and in military skills. Much of this training he often dispensed in person either before or after he became kāranavan. He was responsible for maintaining the junior men of his taravād and for guarding and, if possible, augmenting the ancestral property on their behalf. In turn they owed him obedience, loyalty, and submissive respect. A kāranavan might inflict a beating on a disobedient nephew under about the age of sixteen or might order a younger brother to do this on his behalf.

604 Relationships with all mother's brothers within the property group were modeled on that with the kāranavan. A man owed all of them respect and obedience within the framework of the kāranavan's jurisdiction. Often a boy's junior mother's brothers were absent from the taravād. When they were home the mother's own brothers took a special interest in him. They might play with him indulgently until he was about the age of three. After this he learned to respect them, to be quiet in their presence, and to fear his mother's report of his ill conduct to them. As he grew older it was usually from his mother's own brothers that a boy received detailed training in agricultural matters and it was they who most frequently chastised him. Throughout [561] their lives a man owed obedience and loyalty to all men of senior [613] generation in his taravād, and after their deaths, regular offerings [969] in propitiation of their spirits.

The etiquette of behavior between a man and his mother's brothers [576]

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604 613 561 578 to the mother's husband in their earliest years, there seems no doubt that a great part of their hostility to male elders became focused on the mother's brothers by about the age of five, and that much of it remained conscious. Thus occasional stories are told today of nephews who poisoned or stabbed their mothers' brothers and it is often remarked that kāranavans are "hated" and that "their position is not safe." Such tales of violence are regarded as shocking, but they do not arouse the horror with which a Hindu of the patrilineal castes would receive a story of patricide.

604 561 578 Relationships with the mother's mother's brothers were less intense and rivalrous than with the mother's brothers. Until the age of three or four a small boy might be a playful visitor to the room of the great-uncle who was his kāranavan. Often, this elder died while he was still small, so that the boy retained only affectionate memories of him. Otherwise he learned to behave with even greater formality to this elder than to his mother's brothers. He saw the great-uncle less often, however, and was seldom directly punished by him, so that the relationship tended to remain one of distant geniality.

604 MAN-SISTER'S DAUGHTER

As the head of her taravād a kāranavan owed his sister's daughter maintenance, shelter, and legal and physical protection. At her tāli rite and during her subsequent marriage relationships, only the sexual rights in a woman were lost to her taravād. All other rights, in her procreative powers and domestic services, remained vested in her taravād, represented by its kāranavan. He could command her obedience in the performance of household and minor agricultural work. [429] [684] He automatically became the full legal guardian of children born to her legitimately. If she seriously infringed the religious laws of her caste, for example, by having sex relations with a man of lower caste, it was his duty to expel her from the taravād and his right (very occasionally exercised) to put her to death by the sword.

604 584 595 178 In the nineteenth century, when monogamy gradually became customary, a kāranavan arranged the marriage of his sister's daughter. In earlier periods Nayar women seem to have exercised considerable freedom to select or reject their husbands. A woman might not, however, oppose her kāranavan's right to dismiss an unwelcome husband.

604 All the mother's brothers of a woman had the right to command her domestic services and to discipline her in minor ways. As in the case of a boy, they might play with her until she reached the age of three or four, after which they became somewhat feared authorities. [861] A man might occasionally beat his sister's daughter, until the age of

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seven or eight, but he would not inflict heavy punishment unless he was sure of the child's grandmother's and her kāranavan's support. After she had undergone the tāli rite a man was forbidden to touch any junior woman of his taravād. His relationship with his sister's daughter thereafter became very distant. In accordance with rules associated with incest prohibitions, he might not be alone in a room with her and would scrupulously avoid suspicion of intimacy. He would absent himself when her husband entered the house, remaining on the outer veranda, in the separate men's building, or in the house of his wife. A woman must remain standing and remove her upper clothing when her mother's brother entered her presence. She must not speak first to him, must not laugh in his presence, and must respond with extreme submissiveness to his requests. When possible a man would communicate advice to his sister's daughter through some kinswoman senior to both of them. Thus, except to serve him with food, a woman had little direct intercourse with her mother's brothers.

Modern Nayars admit freely that the partial avoidance between men of the taravād, on the one hand, and that between men and women junior to them in the taravād, on the other, have quite different foundations. The former is a defense against aggression, the latter against desire. Nayars partially avoid their younger sisters and nieces, it is admitted, because otherwise they might be tempted to commit incest with them. As things are, in speaking with others, men often express a respectful tenderness toward their sisters' daughters and a pride in their qualities. Because of the difference of sex, and therefore of ambitions and interests, there is much less potential conflict here than in the relationship with the sister's son. By an orthodox kāranavan in particular, its young women are seen as the fine flower of his taravād. Whatever may be his more selfish inner feelings, he expresses gladness when there are many of them to perpetuate his matrilineal group. For their sakes and for the sake of the heirs they may bring him, he welcomes their husbands to his home. When the latter are aristocrats of higher caste, his pride seems the more easily to outweigh any potential hostility toward them.

In orthodox homes today, women's attitudes to their mothers' brothers seem to be variously compounded of fear and admiration. A woman fears her uncle's anger and may resent his harshness toward her brothers and sons. If, however, he manages her household with equity and if his reputation stands high in his neighborhood, he may become a distant hero in her eyes.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Thandans

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earlier, but I give the information here as it was recorded by me at the time from the informant's statement.)

853

In spite of a child being fed at the breast very late, the habit of sucking a jump or a finger existed in Kerala as much as it does with us. Nani said that mothers did try to stop it, telling the child that it is bad, and threatening punishment should it persist. There were no substitutes given, such as rubber teats, and the habit was the natural derivative of breast suckling. When the children had teeth, they used them freely when feeding, and also pulled and scratched the breast with their hands. Boys and girls behaved similarly in this respect and she could notice no difference due to sex between them.

863 [854]

Diapers made of cotton cloth in which the child was wrapped were used for the first year and a half. Then the baby was taught the rudiments of sanitation and shown where and how to go. The mother was almost exclusively in charge of teaching the child this, but sometimes in exceptional circumstances (when she was in the polluting period of her menses), the father, the one most fond of the children, would take the task upon himself. Should the baby forget itself or disobey what it had been told, it would be beaten with a twig over the buttocks or threatened that it would be carried away by a madman or a cat or a dog.

[861]

865 [513]

Children slept together on the same mat on the floor of the house until the age of twelve. Aggression between them was quite marked at an early age, and Nani had already told me how the infants with teeth treated her when feeding. A new-born child caused the development of much jealousy among the elder children and they bit and scratched at this time even more than usual. Sridaran was the worst in this way of the four children she had had, and he was still the most aggressive of them all. He often threatened to drive his mother out onto the road and back to the house from whence she came, and accompanied his threats with kicks. He never dared, however, to say such things to his fathers, and showed a marked preference for Narayana, corresponding in this to what Panju had told me about presumed physiological paternity. He seemed to resent any interference from his elder father, especially when the latter insisted on his going to school. He had been known to refuse point blank to go there.

[856]

Raghavan, although very young and quieter now, was pretty bad, too, in the way that he fought, bit and scratched his mother. He was late in walking and talking and had really only just learned to do these things. Madhavan spoke very early, earlier than all of them; at the age of five months, he could already make himself understood with words. Nani